



## VANTHCS Celebrates Veterans Day!



some photos courtesy of North Texas E-News

Sam Rayburn Memorial Veterans Center hosted the Regional Veterans Day ceremony at Bonham High School Warrior Stadium November 5, 2004. Sgt. Maj. Willie J. Martin (USMC-Ret.) served as keynote speaker, and Congressman Ralph Hall greeted the crowd who enjoyed the celebration and military equipment displays.



## From the Director ...

As we remember veterans in this November issue, gather your family and participate in a Veterans Day event. There are many local observances we can attend to honor veterans for their sacrifice and service to our country. And while we prepare for Thanksgiving in the upcoming weeks, let's keep this in mind, "If you enjoy your freedom, thank a vet."

**Alan G. Harper**

November marks several national themes, including Diabetes Education, Homeless, AIDS and Alzheimer's, to name a few, which promote awareness and good health practices.

November is National Alzheimer's Disease (AD) Month. More than four million Americans have AD, and that figure is expected to triple by 2050. An estimated 528,000 veterans suffer from dementia. AD is a progressive, irreversible condition characterized by nerve tangles and brain plaques that lead to dementia. While scientists understand the how of the disease, they still struggle with the why. However, there is evidence that you can help prevent or postpone AD.

- Stay physically active. Physical activity has been shown to reduce the risk of dementia.
- Eat right and avoid a high-fat diet and obesity – factors that increase your risk of AD. Nutrients that may offer protection include: B-complex vitamins found in multivitamins or leafy green vegetables, monosaturated fats such as olive oil, omega-3 fatty acids found in fish and flax seeds, and antioxidant vitamins C and E found in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Engage in a variety of leisure activities, stay sociable, and exercise your brain. Research has found regular mental stimulation keeps your mental faculties sharp.
- Avoid stress. Excess levels of the stress hormone cortisol can damage the hippocampus, an area of the brain that shrinks in AD.
- Control chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol to reduce the chance of damaging your mind.

November also promotes Diabetes Education.

Diabetes, a chronic disease where the body cannot properly turn sugar, starches, and other food into energy, affects about 18 million people and contributes to more than 200,000 deaths in the United States every year. VA provides diabetes care to more than 800,000 patients and spent almost \$13 million on 93 diabetes-related studies in fiscal year 2003. VA research is also examining why diabetes complications appear to differ by ethnic background. African Americans are nearly twice as likely as whites to have diabetes. Diabetics should take extra care to monitor their eyes, feet, and diet and follow these tips to help manage their disease:

- Protect your feet from hot and cold. Wear socks and shoes at all times. Keep the blood flowing to your feet by keeping your feet elevated when sitting.
- Try to eat the same amount of food at the same times every day. Also incorporate exercise into your daily routine.

While Type 1 diabetes most often appears in childhood, steps may be taken to help prevent the onset of Type 2 diabetes:

- Eat a healthy diet. Increase intake of fruits, vegetables, and fiber. Cut back on sugars and fats. Moderation is the key.
- Being overweight increases your risk. Losing even 10-15 pounds can often delay or possibly prevent Type 2 diabetes. Be physically active. Try to incorporate exercise into your routine every day.

**Employee Health Unit is offering flu shots to all employees Monday – Friday  
8:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon; 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**





## Coming in December ... Executive Office Holiday Open House

Next time you pass through the Atrium, take a look at the beautiful plants and greenery. John Perry along with Diana Wilcoxson and the Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) staff has shown remarkable initiative in working to establish meaningful work opportunities for veterans participating in the Day Treatment Program. The CWT crew is dedicated to help veterans in that program create meaningful lives and work activities and have coordinated some very unique endeavors, including this one!

The American Cancer Society has scheduled the 27<sup>th</sup> annual Great American Smokeout for November 18, 2004, to encourage smokers to quit for a day in the hope that some will quit for a lifetime. Smoking is still the leading preventable cause of death and diseases in the U.S., so use the day to encourage someone to stop using tobacco for a day and to let him or her know about the many effective ways to quit for good. See the display in the Atrium November 18 sponsored by Tina McDaniel, Employee Wellness Coordinator.



**Barbara Robinson** performs an AIDS/HIV screening at the EEO Community Health Fair held in October which drew over 300. For many members of the community, this is their only opportunity to receive health care. Ms. Robinson was among approximately 100 staff who participated in this free Fair which provided cholesterol, sickle cell, diabetes, HIV and AIDS, blood pressure and EKG testing, screening for hypertension, mental health, vision, podiatry, dental, nutrition, hearing, prostate cancer and substance abuse. Social, pain management and chaplain services were also available as well as activities for children.



*Infection: Don't Pass It On* is a VA public health campaign underway promoting awareness to remind staff as well as visitors to

wash our hands...

wash our hands...

**wash our hands**



***Have any news? Please submit features or story ideas to Penny Kerby in Public Affairs***



Employees are reminded that this year's open enrollment period for health benefits, "Open Season," will be November 8 – December 13, 2004. In Dallas, health insurance representatives will be available Thursday, November 18, 2004, in Recreation Building 45A, 7:00 a.m. to approximately 4:30 p.m. In Bonham, employees may contact Alana Clark at (903) 583-6525 or Vern Christensen at (903) 583-6548 for health benefits information for their facility. Fort Worth Outpatient Clinic employees may pick up health benefit brochures in the Fort Worth Computer Training Room 202. Employees will use Employee Express (EEX) to make their open season changes that must be made during Open Season to become effective the first day of the pay period, January 9, 2005. Access EEX by visiting the EEX website at [www.employeeexpress.gov](http://www.employeeexpress.gov). Questions concerning the health benefit fair may be referred to Gloria Woodall at (214) 857-1697; questions concerning open season enrollment may be referred to Employee Express at 1-800-414-5272.



Veterans may use *My HealtheVet* to keep records of personal health information, such as blood sugar levels, weight, blood pressure, etc. *My HealtheVet* is an Internet website developed by VA to help veterans understand and manage his/her own health care. More importantly, it is a way to find quality health information. The website [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov) is accessible from any computer, but locations have been made available at VANTHCS near the Pharmacy in Dallas and in the Library at both Bonham and Dallas. Online registration is required. Teresa Hanson, Consumer Health Librarian, is available 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. daily to assist veterans

in the use of *My HealtheVet*. Future features will enable VA patients to see certain information from their VA medical record as well as order prescription refills. New registration will be required November 11, 2004, even if a veteran is previously registered.

Need a website for your service, committee, or program? Create one quickly and easily with VA WebPilot, a web application designed to provide individuals with little or no HTML experience the ability to create and maintain their own web sites. Using WebPilot, you can create a web presence in just minutes. Created with the novice web user in mind, WebPilot formats your design and content into HTML so that you don't have to spend time learning a new language, or money on expensive development tools. VA WebPilot has been named the web design tool of choice for VANTHCS by the Web Task Force. Before beginning any web development, review local policies and guides found at <http://vhantxiis.dallas.med.va.gov/irms/webmasters.htm>. To request creation of a WebPilot site, contact Cindy Godbey, VANTHCS webmaster, at extension 36375.



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214 742-8387

Fort Worth Outpatient Clinic  
300 W. Rosedale  
Fort Worth, TX 76104  
817 335-2202

Sam Rayburn Memorial Veterans Center  
1201 E. Ninth St.  
Bonham, TX 75418  
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